

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2555, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 293 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 293

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2555) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with section 501 of House Concurrent Resolution 95 and clause 2 of rule XXI are waived except as follows: sections 514, 521, and 522. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommend with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST), ranking member, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time is yielded for the purposes of debate only.

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 293 is an open rule that provides for the consideration of H.R. 2555, the Fiscal Year 2004 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act. The rule provides 1 hour of general debate evenly divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations.

As we begin the cycle, the 2004 appropriations cycle, I think it is fitting that the first bill that the House considers will be the Department of Home-

land Security Appropriations Act. It has been now approaching 2 years since the Nation was severely hurt by the cowardly attacks of September 11, 2001. Appropriate decisive and necessary steps in our defense and our foreign policy have been evident under the leadership of President Bush through successful efforts to rid Afghanistan of al Qaeda and the oppressive Taliban regime and recently to remove a ruthless dictator from power in Iraq. The United States military has performed and succeeded with extraordinary distinction each and every time that it has been called upon.

Now I look forward to the fair debate that is provided under this rule and the eventual passage of this legislation so that we can continue to act as well on local, State and Federal levels to reinforce the security of the United States of America. Funding from this Congress to protect the homeland in this legislation, the underlying legislation, is \$29.4 billion, \$1 billion over President Bush's request, and this legislation will provide \$4.4 billion to the Office of Domestic Preparedness.

I have seen firsthand the work of Federal dollars when supplemented with State and local funding to make our communities safer. In south Florida the local governments and municipalities have taken extensive steps to secure the safety of airports and seaports, utilities and water supplies, but they certainly need the supplemental funding and grants that this bill makes available. With over 7,500 miles of land border and 361 seaports, the local authorities obviously, Mr. Speaker, will always be the front line of defense. First responders are the key to the effective protection of our communities. The Office of Domestic Preparedness has seen an increase in grants and aid of 1,400 percent since September 11, 2001. Through fiscal year 2004, this Congress has enacted or proposed over \$17 billion in funding for local emergency work. Although much of the funding goes through State governments for distribution, of those funds 80 percent must be sent, passed on to the local municipalities by the States within 45 days.

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To further ensure the safety of the American people, we have instituted very clear guidelines for grant eligibility. Local and State officials must create a multiyear Homeland Security Plan. This will ensure that Congress is not just throwing money at the problem, but working to find a forum in which State and local governments can find comprehensive, long-term solutions.

The Department of Homeland Security is also working diligently to protect our ports of entry. There is \$61.7 million in this bill for the Container Security Initiative known as CSI. It is our belief that security at the ports of the United States should really be the

last line of defense, if possible, and not the first.

Through the Container Security Initiative, the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection is working with the world's largest ports to secure and screen cargo before it leaves for the United States. We now require 24-hour advanced notice for manifests of cargo ships heading to the United States. This allows the Department of Homeland Security to see what is on a ship before it gets near the coasts of the United States. Through a sophisticated database screening system and ground personnel working with other countries, the Department of Homeland Security is creating a frontline of defense hundreds, and, in many instances, thousands of miles from the United States.

H.R. 2555 also continues funding for the Transportation Security Administration at over \$5 billion, \$5.172 billion to be exact, \$360 million over the President's request, as we continue to work to ensure that airplane travel is as safe as possible.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this bill addresses the creation of Project Bioshield. In a speech to the Bio 2003 Convention Center and Exhibition yesterday, President George W. Bush stated, "Project Bioshield will give our scientific leaders greater authority and more flexibility in decisions that may affect our national security. Our labs will be able to hire the right experts, to buy the right equipment, and to speed the construction of the right facilities to accelerate urgently needed discoveries."

Mr. Speaker, I believe that Project Bioshield is truly one of the most important programs created as a direct result of the threats to the homeland of the United States. Similar to the space race during the decade of the 1960s, the Nation faces a time when it must rely on the great innovations of science and research, in this instance, to keep our communities safe. I am confident that this legislation addresses those needs by providing Project Bioshield with nearly \$6 billion over the next 10 years.

H.R. 2555, Mr. Speaker, is very important legislation. It is important that we bring it forth today. I am proud to be able to do so. It is essential to the continued commitment by this Congress for the security and safety of all citizens and residents of the United States and, in fact, to the well-being of our homeland. We bring it forth under a fair and open rule. The legislation was reported out of the Committee on Appropriations by a voice vote. I think it is very appropriate to thank, and I do so, the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG) and the gentleman from Kentucky (Chairman ROGERS) for their leadership on this important issue; and I urge my colleagues to support both the rule and the underlying legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.